

What is claimed is:

- 1        1. A method for forming active regions of field effect transistors, comprising:
  - 2            (a) forming at least one conductive region over an isolation layer formed on a substrate,  
3 and a cap dielectric layer on the at least one conductive region;
  - 4            (b) forming a sacrificial dielectric layer over the isolation layer and the cap dielectric  
5 layer, and on sidewalls of the at least one conductive region;
  - 6            (c) removing a portion of the sacrificial dielectric layer on the cap dielectric layer;
  - 7            (d) removing the cap dielectric layer; and
  - 8            (e) removing remaining portions of the sacrificial dielectric layer.

- 1        2. The method of claim 1, wherein the cap dielectric layer includes a first cap dielectric  
2 layer and a second cap dielectric layer.

- 1        3. The method of claim 2, wherein step (d) comprises the step of removing the first cap  
2 dielectric layer and the second cap dielectric layer.

- 1        4. The method of claim 3, wherein the sacrificial dielectric layer is formed to a thickness  
2 at least larger than a thickness loss caused by removing the first cap dielectric layer and the  
3 second cap dielectric layer.

- 1        5. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing a sputtering step to trim the  
2 remaining portions of the sacrificial dielectric layer prior to removal thereof.

- 1        6. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one conductive region has a mesa  
2 structure.

- 1        7. The method of claim 1, wherein the sacrificial dielectric layer is formed to a thickness  
2 at least larger than a thickness loss caused by step (d).

1        8. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) is performed by a chemical mechanical polish  
2 (CMP) process with a high selectivity slurry.

1        9. The method of claim 8, wherein the CMP process with the high selectivity slurry has  
2 different removing rates for different regions of the sacrificial dielectric layer in response to  
3 different polish pressures applied thereto.

1        10. The method of claim 9, wherein the high selectivity slurry comprises a ceria-based  
2 abrasive and an electronegative surfactant.

1        11. The method of claim 1; further comprising the step of performing a cleaning process  
2 after step (d), wherein said sacrificial dielectric layer has a thickness during said cleaning process  
3 sufficient to substantially protect said at least one conductive region from undercut in the  
4 isolation layer.

1        12. A method for forming active regions of field effect transistors, comprising:  
2            (a) forming at least one conductive mesa over an isolation layer formed on a substrate,  
3 and a cap dielectric layer on the at least one conductive mesa;  
4            (b) forming a sacrificial dielectric layer over the isolation layer and the cap dielectric  
5 layer, and on sidewalls of the at least one conductive mesa;  
6            (c) removing a portion of the sacrificial dielectric layer on the cap dielectric layer by a  
7 chemical mechanical polish (CMP) process with a high selectivity slurry;  
8            (d) removing the cap dielectric layer, wherein the sacrificial dielectric layer is formed to a  
9 thickness at least larger than a thickness loss caused by removal step (d); and  
10          (e) removing remaining portions of the sacrificial dielectric layer.

1        13. The method of claim 12, wherein the cap dielectric layer includes a first cap dielectric  
2 layer and a second cap dielectric layer.

1        14. The method of claim 13, wherein step (d) comprises the step of removing the first cap  
2 dielectric layer and the second dielectric layer.

1        15. The method of claim 14, wherein the sacrificial dielectric layer is formed to a  
2 thickness at least larger than a thickness loss caused by removing the first cap dielectric layer and  
3 the second cap dielectric layer.

1        16. The method of claim 12, further comprising performing a sputtering step to trim the  
2 remaining portions of the sacrificial dielectric layer prior to removal thereof.

1        17. The method of claim 12, wherein the CMP process with the high selectivity slurry has  
2 different removing rates for different regions of the sacrificial dielectric layer in response to  
3 different polish pressures applied thereto.

1        18. The method of claim 17, wherein the high selectivity slurry comprises a ceria-based  
2 abrasive and an electronegative surfactant.

1        19. A method for forming field effect transistors, comprising:  
2            (a) forming at least one conductive mesa over an isolation layer formed on a substrate,  
3 and a cap dielectric layer on the at least one conductive mesa;  
4            (b) forming a sacrificial dielectric layer over the isolation layer and the cap dielectric  
5 layer, and on sidewalls of the at least one conductive mesa;  
6            (c) removing a portion of the sacrificial dielectric layer on the cap dielectric layer by a  
7 chemical mechanical polish (CMP) process with a high selectivity slurry;  
8            (d) removing the cap dielectric layer;  
9            (e) removing remaining portions of the sacrificial dielectric layer;  
10          (f) forming a gate on the at least one conductive region; and  
11          (g) forming source/drain (S/D) regions within the at least one conductive region and  
12 adjacent to the gate.

1        20. The method of claim 19, wherein the cap dielectric layer includes a first cap dielectric  
2 layer and a second cap dielectric layer.

1        21. The method of claim 20, wherein step (d) comprises the step of removing the first cap  
2 dielectric layer and the second dielectric layer.

1        22. The method of claim 21, wherein the sacrificial dielectric layer is formed to a  
2 thickness at least larger than a thickness loss caused by removing the first cap dielectric layer and  
3 the second cap dielectric layer.

1        23. The method of claim 19, further comprising performing a sputtering step to trim the  
2 remaining portions of the sacrificial dielectric layer prior to removal thereof.

1        24. The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one conductive region has a mesa  
2 structure.

1        25. The method of claim 19, wherein the sacrificial dielectric layer is formed to a  
2 thickness at least larger than a thickness loss caused by step (d).

1        26. The method of claim 19, wherein step (c) is performed by a chemical mechanical  
2 polish (CMP) process with a high selectivity slurry.

1        27. The method of claim 26, wherein the CMP process with the high selectivity slurry has  
2 different removing rates for different regions of the sacrificial dielectric layer in response to  
3 different polish pressures applied thereto.

1        28. The method of claim 27, wherein the high selectivity slurry comprises a ceria-based  
2 abrasive and an electronegative surfactant.

1        29. An integrated circuit including a field effect transistor, the field effect transistor  
2 comprising:

3        a conductive region on a substrate having an isolation layer formed thereon, the isolation  
4 layer being substantially without undercut at the region within the isolation layer beneath the  
5 conductive region;

6           a gate on the conductive region; and  
7           source/drain (S/D) regions within the conductive region and adjacent to the gate.

1           30. The integrated circuit of claim 29, wherein any undercut within the isolation layer  
2           beneath the conductive region has a lateral depth no more than about 100Å.

1           31. The integrated circuit of claim 29, wherein the conductive region has a mesa  
2           structure.

1           32. An integrated circuit including a plurality field effect transistors having active regions  
2           formed by the process of claim 1.

1           33. A method for forming field effect transistors, comprising:  
2           (a) forming at least one conductive region over an isolation layer formed on a substrate;  
3           (b) forming a sacrificial dielectric layer over the isolation layer and adjacent to said at  
4           least one conductive region;  
5           (c) forming a gate dielectric layer over said at least one conductive region, and  
6           (d) performing a cleaning process prior to forming said gate dielectric layer, wherein said  
7           sacrificial dielectric layer is formed to a thickness sufficient to substantially protect said at least  
8           one conductive region from undercut in the isolation layer from said cleaning process.

1           34. The method of claim 33, wherein said cleaning process utilizes a HF solution.